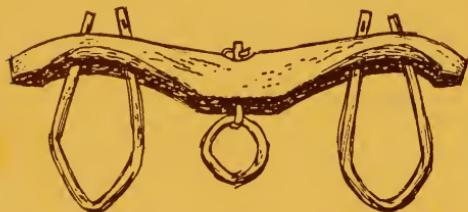


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Man's Most Valuable Words--The
Gettysburg Address

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Man's Most Valuable Words
... The Gettysburg Address

By GUY ALLISON



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Man's Most Valuable Words-- The Gettysburg Address

By
GUY ALLISON



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About the Author

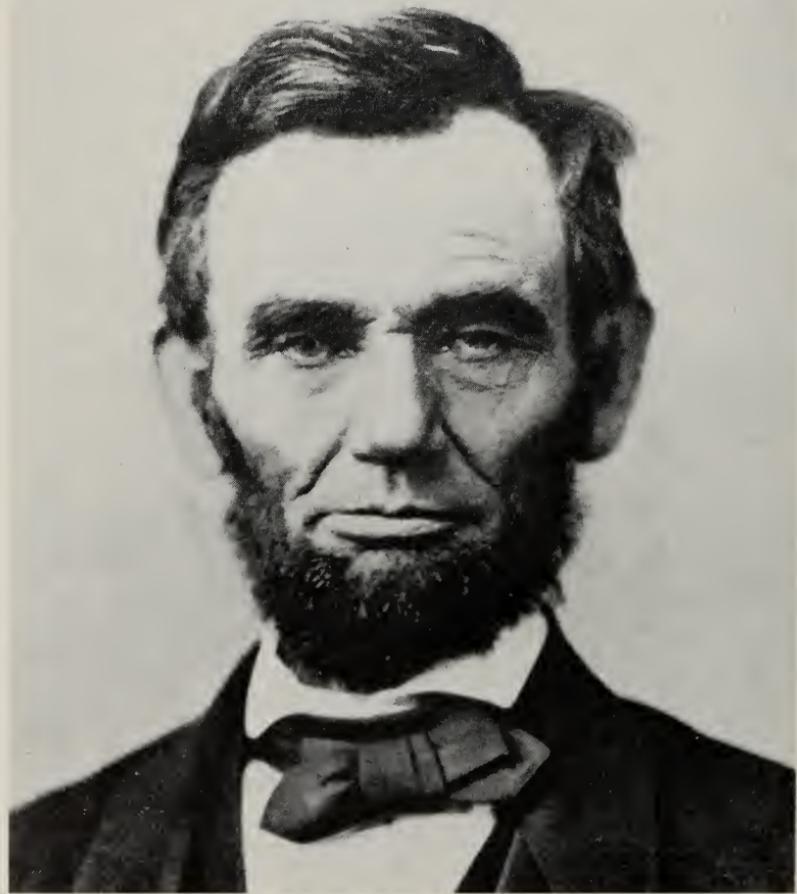
Mr. Guy Allison was born near Hannibal, Mo., educated in Kirksville, Mo., Normal, Western Washington College of Education, Bellington, Wash., and University of California. Taught schools several years, as principal of small high school, and McKinley School of Tacoma. Entered wholesale fruit and vegetable business as California buyer for large wholesale house in Northwest, later branch manager of houses at South Bend, Wash., and Portland, Oregon. In 1918 established G. S. Allison, carload packers and distributors of California fruits and vegetables with branches at San Francisco, Los Angeles, Imperial Valley and Turlock, Calif. Retired 1936. Since retirement has traveled extensively through all the states, and visited more historical spots than any living American. Has authored syndicated column, *Bypaths of History*, since 1938, has published over 5,600 stories in past 20 years. Interest in Lincoln began many years ago. Has visited every spot connected with the principal events of his life. Married, wife and son and two married daughters. 1950 awarded citation by Glendale Historical Society for historical writings; 1951 biography in Who's Who on the Pacific Coast; 1953 Who's Who in the West; 1953 awarded citation for historical contributions by Washington State Centennial Commission; 1954 awarded Life Membership in Washington State Capitol Historical Society; 1955, one of 19 individuals in U. S., Canada, and Alaska nominated for awards at the National Convention for State and Local History at Williamsburg, Virginia.

To
LeRoy E. Smith
friend and owner of
the Wills House

"May this booklet and the plaque of The Gettysburg Address which I have presented to the City of Gettysburg, with you as its guardian, ever be a reminder to you, and to the untold thousands of my fellow Americans, who may visit your room in the years which lie ahead, that your little city has a priceless heritage to pass on unsullied to generations of Americans unborn. That heritage being that Abraham Lincoln was a guest of your city, and in your very house he penned the last 9½ lines of the first draft of his immortal speech, and also copied the second draft of it, which second draft he used in delivering his message on November 19, 1863."

GUY ALLISON





Portrait taken 1863 in Washington, D. C., about the time of the Gettysburg visit.

Man's Most Valuable Words--

\$2,225 Each

Little did David Wills, chairman of the Gettysburg National Cemetery celebration, dream that the letter he wrote to Abraham Lincoln, on November 2, 1863, would result in one of the immortal documents in the English language being written. Nor did he ever dream that three copies of those "few appropriate remarks" would be involved in commercial transactions amounting to \$605,000, or at the rate of \$2,225 per word for each of the 272 words which comprised the Gettysburg Address—the highest price ever paid for written words.

The story behind the writing of this ageless address is an intriguing one. The preparation for the Gettysburg celebration, and the dedication of a national cemetery for the Union soldiers who lost their lives on that famous battlefield began early in August, just a month after the battle had been fought. A committee, appointed by Governor Curtin, of Pennsylvania, of which Mr. David Wills, a prominent lawyer and citizen of Gettysburg, was chairman, extended an invitation to the noted Edward Everett, America's foremost orator at that time, to give the principal address. The invitation was tendered two months in advance of the event.

The idea of having President Lincoln participate in the exercises did not occur to the members of the committee until within less than three weeks of the event. This invitation was forwarded by Mr. Wills, the chairman in charge of arrange-

ments, in a letter dated November 2, 1863, which letter read as follows:

“To His Excellency, A. Lincoln,
President of the United States:

“Sir:—The several states having soldiers in the Army of the Potomac, who were killed at the Battle of Gettysburg, or have



*The Gettysburg National Cemetery
Scene of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address*

since died at the various hospitals which were established in the vicinity, have procured grounds on a prominent part of the battlefield, for a cemetery, and are having the dead removed to them and properly buried.

“These grounds will be consecrated and set apart to this

sacred purpose, by appropriate ceremonies on Thursday, November 19. Hon. Edward Everett will deliver the oration.

"I am authorized by the governors of the different states to invite you to be present, and participate in these ceremonies, which will doubtless be very imposing and solemnly impressive.

"It is the desire, that after the oration you, as chief executive of the nation, formally set apart these grounds to their sacred use by a few appropriate remarks.

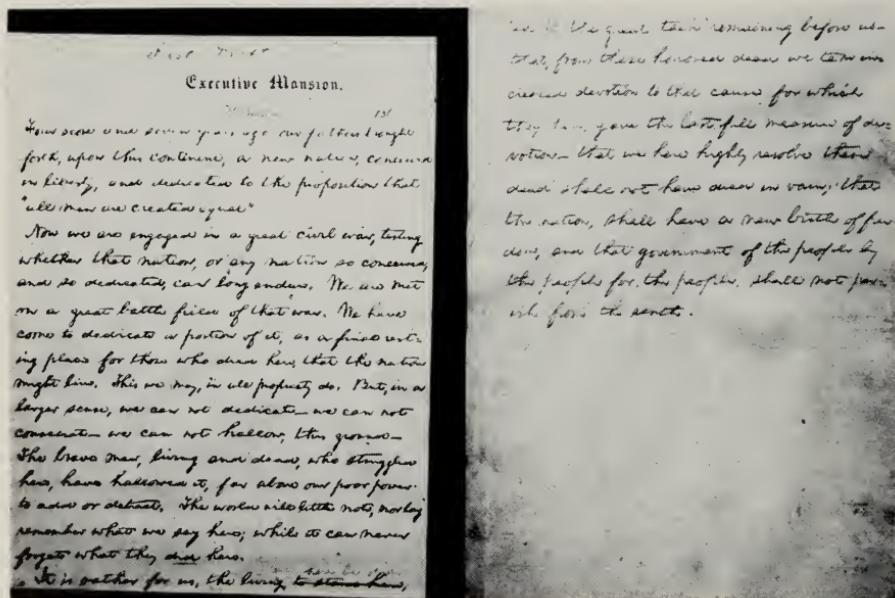
"It will be a source of great gratification to the many widows and orphans that have been made almost friendless by the great battle here, to have you here personally, and it will kindle anew in the breasts of the comrades of these brave dead, who are now in the tented field, or nobly meeting the foe at the front, a confidence that they who sleep in death on the battlefield, are not forgotten by those highest in authority, and they will feel that, should their fate be the same, their remains will not be uncared for.

"We hope you will be able to be present and perform this last, but solemn act to the soldier dead on this battlefield. I am, with great respect, your Excellency's obedient servant, David Wills, Agt. A. G. Curtin, Governor of Pennsylvania, and acting for all the states."

The above invitation probably arrived at the Executive Mansion in Washington on November 4th—only two weeks and two days before the event was to occur. During those two weeks the President was a busy and a worried man. Congress was to convene early in December, and he was working on his state of the Union speech. Then, too, his little son, Tad, was desperately ill. How then, was it possible for him to concentrate upon this assignment, and to produce, in that brief time, one of the immortal documents of human history?

A careful perusal of the Lincoln collection of letters in the

Library of Congress, by this writer, did not disclose the exact time and place where Lincoln wrote the first draft of the Gettysburg Address. However, we have the authority of James B. Speed, Lincoln's intimate friend from Illinois, and who, at a later period, was named Attorney General, in Lincoln's cabinet, that he had spent the evening with the



First Draft

President, on the day before he left for Gettysburg. During their conversation the latter told Speed that on the previous evening he had jotted down a few remarks for the ensuing dedicatory exercises. Those jottings evidently were those of the first page of the Gettysburg speech, written in pen and ink on a sheet of the Executive Mansion stationery. This sheet of paper was about eight inches wide and nine inches in length. This sheet Lincoln took with him to Gettysburg.

After supper, on the evening of his arrival at his destination, Mr. Lincoln retired to his bedroom, and taking a large sheet of ruled foolscap paper, he penned the concluding 9½ lines of his “remarks,” using a pencil instead of a pen. This draft contained 240 words.

Thus, the first draft of the Gettysburg Address was written on two different size sheets of paper; one page of which was written with pen and ink, the other page with a pencil.

On the following morning—November 19—after breakfast, Mr. Lincoln went to his bedroom, and went over his manuscript. He decided to transcribe it to two equal size sheets of paper—the large ruled foolscap—and write it with pen and ink. In transcribing his second copy he made a few changes, so that instead of 240 words, the second copy had 269 words. This was the copy the President used in delivering his speech.

In this remarkable piece of perfect English diction, there are three outstanding groups of words, which have indelibly stamped themselves upon the imagination of mankind. The first group contains these words: “Four score and seven years ago”; the second group, “that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom”; the third group, “that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

The first expression, “four score and seven years ago,” doubtless had its origin in the short speech President Lincoln made to a group of people who serenaded him at the White House on the evening of July 7, 1863, when definite news of the Union victory at Gettysburg was officially received in Washington. In that speech, which was wholly unpremeditated, he mentioned “80-odd years,” referring, of course to the difference in time between the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and the Battle of Gettysburg in

1863—87 years. His opening words of the address came as a happy inspiration.

The words, “under God,” were not included in either the first or second drafts of the Address, as penned by Mr. Lincoln, but they doubtless came to his mind during the solemn exercises which preceded his own 272 word dedicatory remarks. Most students believe that Lincoln got this expression from Weems, “Life of Washington,” a book with which Lincoln early became familiar.

In Parson Weems book, this expression was often used. In his chapter on the death of Washington, he said: “Sons and daughters of Columbia, gather yourselves around the bed of your expiring father—around the last bed of him to whom you and your children owe, under God, many of the best blessings of this life.” Lincoln knew his Weems by heart, and there is little doubt that this expression, above quoted, had its source from that writer.

The closing words of the Gettysburg Address, “government of the people, by the people, for the people,” might have come from any of many sources, but the most probable origin would be Daniel Webster, or Theodore Parker. The former had defined the American government as, “the people’s government, made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people.”

On that fine November day in 1863, some 15,000 people thronged the streets of the little town of Gettysburg, then having a population of but 1,300. They had come to see and hear a program in which Abraham Lincoln was destined to play the most important role, although at the time, his part was but a minor one.

Among those sitting on the rostrum was Colonel Clark Carr, the Illinois representative on the Gettysburg Cemetery

Commission. Here is the record he left of that event as it applied to Mr. Lincoln's participation:

"When President Lincoln appeared on the platform, it was the first opportunity the people really had had to see him. There was the usual craning of necks, the usual, 'Down in



*The Bedroom Lincoln Used While
a Visitor in the Home of Judge David Wills*

front!' calls, the swaying of the crowd to get better vantage points. During this confusion the President waited patiently for the audience to become quiet, so that when he began there was absolute silence while he spoke.

"He began in those high clarion tones which the people of Illinois had so often heard, to which he held to the close. His was a voice that, when he made the effort, could be heard by a great multitude.

now have now with you - & I find
myself perfectly contented in our Union now
as ever in Oct'y and anxious to its preservation
till all men are equal again
Now we are engaged in a great Anti-slavery
war whether this nation, or my nation or ourselves
are so dedicated to a long duration. We are not
now in a - better time of life than we have
~~ever~~^{now} been in favor of it at the final victory
of this war. We have given it every thing
we have in place. It is very painful
to prefer what we should do this.

But in a larger sense we can not dedicate
we can not consecrate we can not hallow the
ground. Our forefathers did their best to do
you know their consecration is far above ours
to have a nation. The world will little note
how long we labor, what we say here, how
can miss you, & what they, dear friends, do it
for us. The living soldiers to be dedicated
how to the unfinished work which they have
thus far so nobly carried on. So we scatter

so as to have connected to the great
task remaining Report that from these
however decisive like enormous addition
to the cause for which they have given you
the best full measure of assistance that
we are highly resolve that these dear
shall not have done in regard to the
nation there has a new birth of freedom
and that that government of the people by
the people, for the people, shall be given
for the world.

Second Draft

"He held in his left hand two or three sheets of manuscript (two) toward which he glanced but once. He spoke with deliberation, but could not have continued more than three or four, and some said two, minutes.

"So short a time was Mr. Lincoln before them that the people could scarcely believe their eyes when he disappeared from their view. They were almost dazed. They could not possibly, in so short a time, mentally grasp the ideas that were conveyed, nor even their substance.

"Time and again expressions of disappointment were made to me. Many persons said that they would have supposed that on such an occasion the President would have made a speech. Everyone thought, as expressed by Mr. Wills (where the President had been a house guest) four days later, that instead of a speech, Mr. Lincoln made only a few dedicatory remarks.

"We on the platform heard every word. And what did we hear? Only a dozen commonplace sentences, scarcely one of which contained anything new, nor anything that when stated was not self evident."

At the conclusion of the exercises at the cemetery, a dinner was served at the Wills house, after which the President attended a service at the Presbyterian church. He had to leave before the services were concluded in order to catch the train for its return trip to Washington. During this trip he suffered severely from a headache. On the following day he took to his bed with a slight attack of smallpox, which confined him to his bed for two weeks.

On the morning following their return from Gettysburg, Edward Everett wrote a note to the President in which he said:

"Permit me to express my admiration of the thoughts expressed by you with such eloquent simplicity and appropriateness at the consecration of the cemetery.

"I would be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near the central idea of the occasion in two hours, as you did in two minutes."

To this kindly note Mr. Lincoln replied, "Your kind note of today is received. In our respective parts, you could not have been excused in making a short address, nor I a long one. I am pleased to know, that in your judgment the little I did say was not entirely a failure."

Over two months passed after the dedication of the Gettysburg Cemetery. The new congress had convened, and the President was engrossed in the various problems which presented themselves. Attention was again centered on the war and its consequent sufferings. Numerous fairs were to be held to raise money for the relief of the wounded soldiers

and sailors. Among these was the fair to be held in New York City early in March, 1864.

Mrs. Hamilton Fish, chairman of the Ladies' Committee, wrote to Edward Everett, asking him to donate his copy of the address which he had given at Gettysburg, to be sold at auction at the forthcoming fair. Upon receipt of this request, Everett wrote to the President asking him if he would contribute his copy of the speech he had made at the same celebration. In this letter which was written on January 4, 1864, Everett said:

"I have promised to give my manuscript to Mrs. Hamilton Fish, chairman of the Ladies' Committee of the Metropolitan Fair. It would add greatly to the value of it, if I could bind up with it, the manuscript of your dedicatory remarks, if you happen to have preserved them."

On February 4 President Lincoln answered as follows:

"Yours of January 30 was received a few days ago, and since then, the address mentioned has arrived. Thank you for it. I send herewith the manuscript of my remarks at Gettysburg, which, with my note to you, of November 20, you are at liberty to use for the benefit of our soldiers, as you have requested."

In sending the copy of the Address to Mr. Everett, the President had asked his secretaries to compare the copy of the address he had written with the newspaper reports of the address, as actually spoken at Gettysburg. In making the comparison, it was noted that all the newspapers had reported him as having added the words, "under God" to the last sentence of the speech. So, instead of sending his original copy, he wrote out a new copy on February 4, in which he included the above words, and sent that to Everett.

When the Metropolitan Fair opened in New York, the address of Everett, to which was attached the revised form

of Mr. Lincoln's dedicatory remarks, was put up for sale at auction, and was bought by a man by the name of Keyes, from New Hampshire, for \$1,000. This third copy, containing 273 words, became known to history as the "Keyes Copy."

Four score and seven years ago our fathers on
the field upon this continent a new nation conceived
in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all
men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war testing
whether that nation or any nation so conceived and
so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great
battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate
a portion of that field as a final resting place for
those who here gave their lives that that nation
might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that
we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—
we can not consecrate—we can not hallow—
this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who
struggled here, have consecrated it far above
our poor power to add or detract. The world will
little note, nor long remember, what we say here.
It can never forget what they did here. It is for us,
the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished
work which they who fought here have thence
for, so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be
here dedicated to the great task remaining before
us, that from these honored dead we take increase
an devotion to that cause for which they here gave
the last full measure of devotion—that we here
highly resolve that these dead shall not have
died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall
have a new birth of freedom—nearer, government
of the people, by the people, for the
people, shall not perish from the earth.

THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS IN THE HANDWRITING OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

These are the original manuscripts made by the President of the United States at the suggestion of the National Cemetery Association. Photostatic reproductions of these manuscripts were sold at a price of \$100.00 each. The entire amount received from the sale of these manuscripts was given to the National Cemetery Association for the benefit of sick and wounded Civil War soldiers.

The original manuscript, along with that of the Gettysburg Address, was purchased by the actual editor of "Lincoln," edited by George F. Willard, and was presented in 1941 to the Illinois State Historical Library in Springfield, where it is in permanent exhibition.

Keyes Copy

Along in April, another fair for the relief of sailors and soldiers was planned for Baltimore. Colonel Alexander Bliss, a stepson of the noted historian, George Bancroft, then living in Baltimore, conceived the idea of printing a book composed of the autograph copies of the writings of the noted poets,

statesmen and writers of the country. This publication was to be captioned, "Autograph Leaves of Our Country's Authors."

Colonel Bliss wrote to his stepfather, who lived in Washington, D. C., requesting him to ask the President if he would donate his copy of the Gettysburg Address to be included in the autograph book. Mr. Bancroft went to the White House and made a personal request of Mr. Lincoln that he donate his copy of the address he had made at Gettysburg.

Now score and seven years ago our fathers brought
forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in
Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all
men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing
whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and
so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a
great battle-field of that war. We have come to
indicate as far as of that field, as a final fitting
place for those who have given their lives, that
that nation might live. It is altogether fitting

and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—
we can not consecrate—we can not hallow—this
ground. The brave men, living and dying, who
gave here, have consecrated it far above our poor
powers to add or detract. The world will little
note, nor long remember what we say here; but
it can never forget what they did here. It is
for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the
unfinished work which they who fought here have left
us so nobly advanced; it is rather for us to be
here dedicated to the great task remaining before

us—that from these honored dead we take com-
munity devotion to that cause for which they here gave
the last full measure of devotion—that in the high-
est sense that these men died not but have had a
victory over the nation, under God, shall have
a new birth of freedom—ever larger governments
of the people, by the people, for the people, which
shall not perish from the earth.

Executive Mansion,
Washington, Feb. 22, 1865.
Hon. George Bancroft,
My dear Sir,
Keweenaw is the only
place the trout begin to
run in the month of April.
Yours truly,
James G. Blaine.

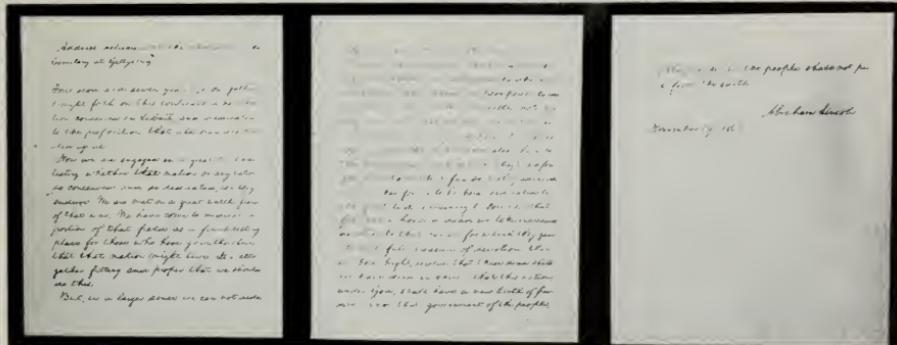
Bancroft Copy

Mr. Lincoln promptly consented and wrote out a copy just like the one he had made for Mr. Everett several weeks earlier. This copy, later known as the Bancroft copy, was sent to Colonel Bliss in Baltimore.

Upon the arrival of the manuscript, it was found unsuitable to be included in the volume for the reason that it did not have the subject, nor the signature of the writer. Thereupon,

Colonel Bliss again wrote to Mr. Bancroft requesting another copy, which would include the subject, as well as the signature of Mr. Lincoln. When Bancroft apologetically requested the President for a new copy, he asked him if he, Bancroft, might retain the former copy which had been found unsuitable for publication. This request was granted.

In preparing this last copy, which was dated March 11, 1864, Mr. Lincoln used great care in its preparation, being very careful in the use of punctuation marks. In this revised



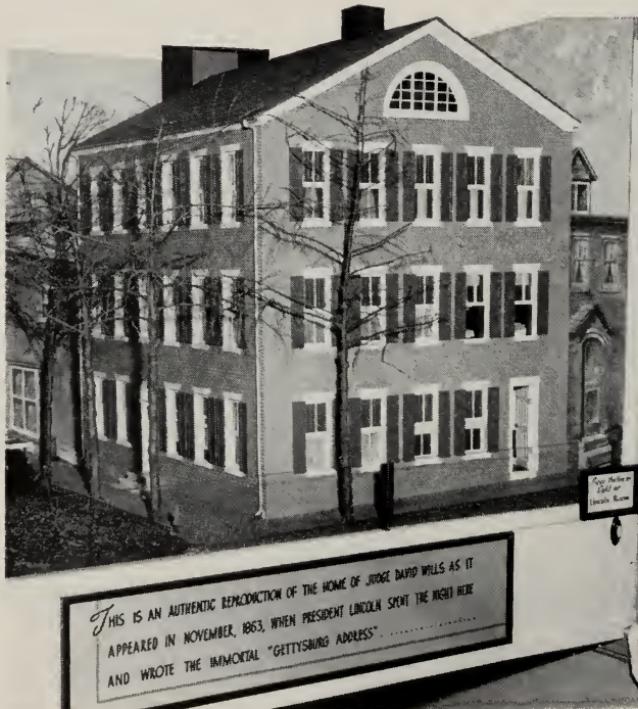
Bliss Copy

copy, which contained 272 words, he omitted one of the words "here," which had been used in the two previous copies. Realizing that it was to appear in book form, the President gave to it the final touch of authority and grammatical construction. This final copy became known as the "Bliss Copy."

For over a half century, the five copies of the Gettysburg Address, all penned by Abraham Lincoln, remained in private hands. The first two drafts were owned, or at least kept in the possession of John Hay, private secretary of President Lincoln, until, in 1916, his heirs presented the two copies

to the Congressional Library, without remuneration. They are now on exhibition in the Library.

The third, or Keyes Copy, after its purchase by an uncle of Senator Henry Keyes, of New Hampshire, at the New York Metropolitan Fair, for \$1,000, remained in the possession of that family until 1929. At that time Senator Keyes sold it to

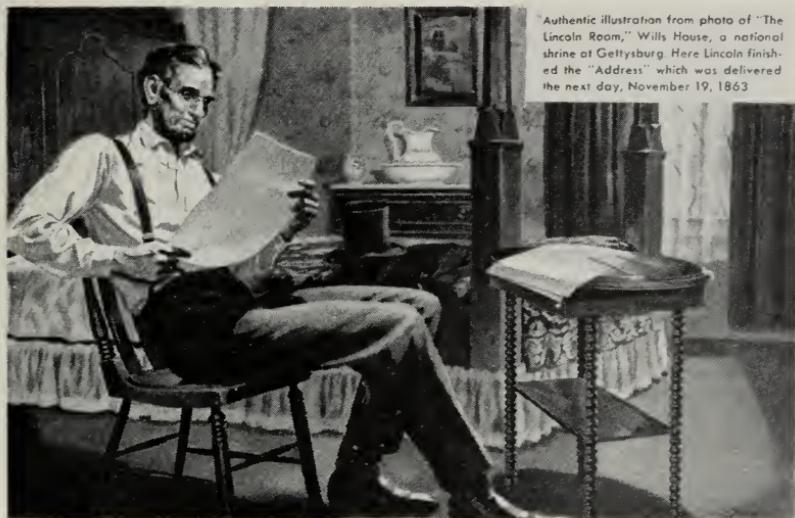


The Wills Home

Thomas Madigan, a manuscript dealer of New York City, for the sum of \$100,000. In turn Mr. Madigan sold it to James C. Ames, a banker of Chicago, for \$150,000. Upon the death of Mr. Ames, his widow had an appraisal made, and it was sold to the State of Illinois for \$60,000, the funds for which

were donated by the school children of Illinois, together with a substantial gift of approximately \$10,000 from the Chicago merchant, Marshall Field. This third copy of the Gettysburg Address, attached to the manuscript of Edward Everett's address, is now on exhibition at the Centennial Museum, in Springfield, Illinois. A total of \$311,000 has been involved in the commercial transactions of this "Keyes Copy."

In an effort to secure information concerning this third copy of the famous historical document, this writer had occasion to correspond with Mr. Henry W. Keyes, a prominent



'Authentic illustration from photo of "The Lincoln Room," Wills House, a national shrine at Gettysburg. Here Lincoln finished the "Address" which was delivered the next day, November 19, 1863.'

attorney of Boston, whose father, Senator Henry Keyes, of New Hampshire, owned the copy for many years. In referring to it, Mr. Keyes, in a letter dated January 22, 1952, said:

"I am sorry I cannot tell you too much about this manuscript. I know my father had it at one time. I believe he inherited it from someone, though I don't know whom, and

your suggestion that it was bought at a fair in New York City sounds correct. I don't know where my father kept it. I can tell you, however, what seems to me the most interesting use made of this manuscript.

"It was, and still is, customary to read Lincoln's Gettysburg Address on his birthday in the United States Senate, and my father read the address from his manuscript on one such occasion. My father was in the Senate from 1919 to 1937, but not on Lincoln's birthday in either the first or last of these years, and my recollection is that he probably read the manuscript at some time in the late '20's.

"I do not know to whom my father sold the manuscript, or what he got for it, but my guess is that he got a great deal less than \$150,000. He reluctantly felt obliged to sell it because the financial strain of many years of public service at a salary inadequate to meet the expenses expected of him." (Note: This writer has read the correspondence connected with this sale. Senator Keyes received \$100,000 for the manuscript.)

The fourth, or Bancroft Copy of the Gettysburg Address, has been involved in financial transactions amounting to \$240,000. From the time that Mr. Lincoln presented this copy to Mr. George Bancroft, in 1864, it remained in the possession of the family until Dr. Wilder Bancroft, a professor in Cornell University, sold it to Thomas Madigan, a manuscript broker in New York, in 1929, for \$100,000.

After keeping it for several years without selling it, the financial depression of the 1930's necessitated Madigan's disposing of the manuscript at a heavy loss. A manuscript broker, by the name of Zinkin, of Indianapolis, bought it for \$50,000. This broker sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas H. Noyes, the former an executive of a wholesale drug company, for a purported sum of \$90,000. After keeping possession of the

manuscript for several years, in 1949, while Cornell was making a drive for funds, Mr. and Mrs. Noyes presented this "Bancroft Copy" to that institution. It is now in the custody of the Cornell Library. This copy contains the text of the Address on pages 1 and 3 of a folded quarto sheet 7 3/4 inches wide, by 9 7/8 inches long.

In the correspondence which this writer had concerning this fourth copy of the Gettysburg Address, a letter was written to Dr. Wilder Bancroft, then a retired octogenarian teacher in the science department of Cornell, and from whom Madigan had bought it in 1929. Judging from the letter, which was almost illegible, due to nervousness of the aged writer of it, Dr. Bancroft advised that he had forgotten how he came into possession of the document, or whether it was the only copy made by Mr. Lincoln, and that he could not recall to whom he had sold it, or what price he got for it.

The final, or fifth copy of the Gettysburg Address, actually written by Mr. Lincoln, and known historically as the "Bliss Copy," remained in the family of Colonel Alexander Bliss, from 1864 to 1949, when it was sold at public auction in New York City, by the Parke-Bernet Galleries, to Senor Oscar Cintas, former Ambassador to the United States from Cuba, for the sum of \$54,000. This was the only copy of the Address to be written on three pages of blue lined paper. These sheets are 8 by 10 inches.

After the death of Colonel Bliss, his son, Dr. William A. Bliss, of Baltimore, acquired possession of it. When he died, his wife and daughter became the owners. About 1929, after Madigan had acquired title to the Bancroft and Keyes copies, he made a purported offer of \$100,000 to Mrs. Bliss for her copy. When a favorable attitude was shown, Madigan went to Baltimore to examine minutely the copy shown to him. For this purpose he used a microscope. The owners became

incensed as though the prospective buyer doubted its authenticity, and refused to sell.

Several years passed, and the owners were again approached by the New York auction firm above mentioned, who, it was reported, told them that the document would doubtless bring as much as had been offered by Madigan. The auction occurred in 1949, but due to the depression, the highest bid was but \$54,000, and Senor Cintas, of Havana, Cuba, acquired possession, which he still retains.

Thus, the three copies of the immortal Gettysburg Address have been involved in sales totalling \$605,000, or \$2,225 per word—the highest price ever paid for words penned by man.

President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

..¶] *Delivered at the Dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery, November 19, 1863* [¶..

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here: but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Mechanics of the Gettysburg Address

In the five drafts of the Gettysburg Address, as written by Mr. Lincoln, the number of words vary. In the first draft there are 240 words; in the second, 269; in the third and fourth copies, 273 words each; and in the final, or Bliss copy, there are 272. In counting these words, "battle-field" is considered as two words.

Of the 272 words in the Bliss copy there are: seven one-letter words—the article "a"; 50 two-letter words; 60 three-letter words; 57 four-letter words; 35 five-letter words; 25 six-letter words; 15 seven-letter words, and only 23 words with eight or more letters.

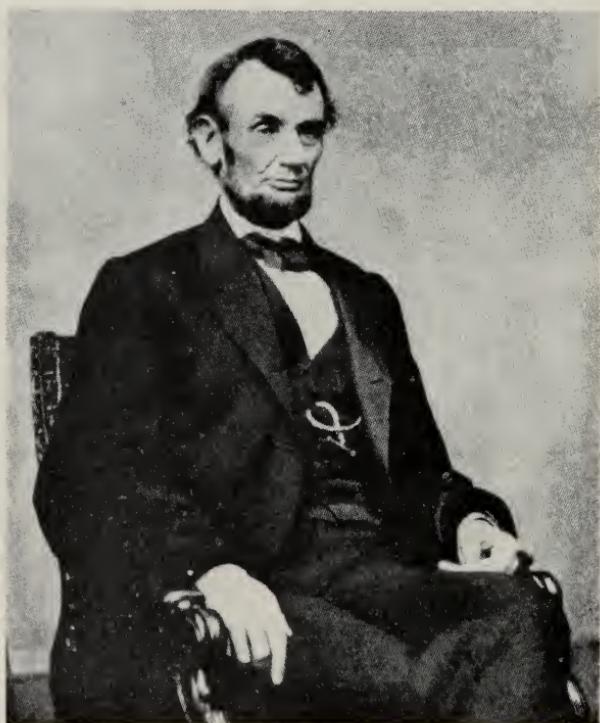
The utter simplicity of the address is indicated when we find that 204 of the words have but one syllable; 49 with but two syllables, and the remaining 19 words having three or more syllables.

The Address is a fine example of perfect English in that it divides itself naturally into the introduction, the argument and the peroration. In the first five sentences of the exordium there is a clear, obvious and direct statement of purpose of the speech. Then follow five simple sentences in which the argument is given, and the concluding sentence sets forth, in beautiful simplicity, the peroration.

Two hundred and twenty-six of the words of the Gettysburg Address are of Anglo-Saxon origin, which means that only about one-fifth of them were words of other than plain old English.

The use of the word "that" thirteen times might possibly have been subject to criticism, on account of the monotony of repetition, but even its use has not prevented the Gettysburg Address from maintaining its place in history as one of the three or four most perfect examples of English composition.

“The Union Must be Preserved”



*“...that government of the people, by
the people, for the people, shall not
perish from the earth.”*



"With malice toward none; with charity for all."

Second Inaugural Address

March 4, 1865

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA

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MAN'S MOST VALUABLE WORDS GETTYSBURG, P



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